

118698 - Consensus that the Earth is round

the question

Is there consensus that the Earth is round? If there is, then what is the evidence from the Qur'an or Sunnah that the Earth is round or egg shaped?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

More than one of the scholars have narrated that there is consensus that the Earth is round. For example:

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that from Abu'l-Husayn ibn al-Munaadi (may Allah have mercy on him), when he said:

Imam Abu'l-Husayn Ahmad ibn Ja'far ibn al-Munaadi narrated from the prominent scholars who are well known for knowledge of reports and major works in religious sciences, from the second level of Ahmad's companions, that there was no difference of opinion among the scholars that the sky is like a ball.

He said: Similarly they were unanimously agreed that the Earth, with all that is contains of land and sea is like a ball. He said: That is indicated by the fact that the sun, moon and stars do not rise and set over those who are in different parts of the earth at the same time; rather that occurs in the east before it occurs in the west.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (25/195)

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about two men who disputed about the nature of heaven and earth: were they both round bodies? One of them said that they were, but the other

denied that and said there is no basis for that. What is the correct view?

He replied:

The heavens are round, according to the Muslim scholars. More than one of the scholars and Muslim leaders narrated that the Muslims are unanimously agreed on that, such as Abu'l-Husayn Ahmad ibn Ja'far ibn al-Munaadi, one of the leading figures among the second level of the companions of Imam Ahmad, who wrote approximately four hundred books. Consensus on this point was also narrated by Imam Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm and Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi. The scholars narrated that with well-known chains of narration (isnaads) from the Sahaabah and Taabi'een, and they quoted that from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. They discussed that in detail with orally-transmitted evidence. There is also mathematical evidence to that effect, and I do not know of anyone among the well-known Muslim scholars who denied that, apart from a few of those who engaged in arguments who, when they debated with the astrologers denied it for the sake of argument and said: It may be square or hexagonal and so on. They did not deny that it could be round, but they said that the opposite of that was possible. I do not know of anyone who said that it is not round – with any certainty – apart from some ignorant people to whom no one pays any attention.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (6/586)

Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Evidence for the earth being round:

Abu Muhammad said: We are going to discuss some of the arguments against the idea that the earth is round. They said: There is sound evidence that the earth is round, but the common folk say otherwise. Our response – and Allah is the source of strength – is that none of the leading Muslim scholars who deserve to be called imams or leaders in knowledge (may Allah be pleased with them) denied that the earth is round, and there is no narration from them to deny that.

Rather the evidence in the Qur'an and Sunnah stated that it is round. … and he quoted evidence to that effect.

End quote from al-Fasl fi'l-Milal wa'l-Ahwa' wa'l-Nihal (2/78)

The evidence that the earth is round includes the following:

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"He created the heavens and earth for a true purpose; He wraps the night around the day and the day around the night"

[az-Zumar 39:5].

Ibn Hazm and others quoted this verse as evidence.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The earth is round, based on the evidence of the Qur'an, reality, and scientific views.

The evidence of the Qur'an is the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"He created the heavens and earth for a true purpose; He wraps the night around [yukawwir] the day and the day around the night"

[az-Zumar 39:5].

The word yukawwir (translated here as "wraps around" means to make something round, like a turban. It is well-known that night and day follow one another on earth, which implies that the Earth is round, because if you wrap one thing around another thing, and the thing that it is wrapped around is the Earth, then Earth must be round.

With regard to real-life evidence, this has been proven. If a man were to fly from Jeddah, for example, heading west, he would come back to Jeddah from the east, if he flew in a straight line. This is something concerning which no one differs.

With regard to the words of the scholars, they stated that if a man died in the west at sunset, and another died in the west at sunset, and there was some distance between them, the one who died in the west at sunset would inherit from the one who died in the east at sunset, if he was one of his heirs. This indicates that the earth is round, because if the earth were flat, sunset in all regions would occur at the same time. Once this is established, no one can deny it. This is not contradicted by the verses in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?

And at the heaven, how it is raised?

And at the mountains, how they are rooted and fixed firm?

And at the earth, how it is spread out?”

[al-Ghaashiyah 88:17-20]

Because the Earth is huge and its curvature cannot be seen from a short distance, it appears to be spread out and one cannot see anything that would make one fear living on it, but this does not contradict the fact that it is round, because it is very big. However they say that it is not evenly round; rather it is indented or pushed in at the north and south poles. Hence they say that it is egg-shaped.

End quote from Fataawa Noor ‘ala ad-Darb

Thus it is known that the Earth is round, and that is not contradicted by the fact that it is like an egg. Rather the false view is that which claims that it is flat, as the Church used to believe and for

that reason used to curse and burn those scientists who said that it was round.

See: al-‘Almaaniyyah: Nash’atuha wa Tatawwuruha (1/130)

And Allah knows best.